



## COUNTY OF PLACER PROBATION DEPARTMENT

---

*Norma Suzuki*  
Chief Probation Officer

Honorable James Garbolino  
Presiding Judge, Superior Court  
County of Placer  
Historic Courthouse  
101 Maple Street  
Auburn CA 95603

July 20, 2001

Dear Judge Garbolino,

Enclosed you will find the responses of the Chief Probation Officer and the Juvenile Detention Facility Director to the 2000/2001 Grand Jury Final Report. An information copy of these responses has been provided to the Board of Supervisors.

Please contact me if you have any comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

---

Norma Suzuki  
Chief Probation Officer



# COUNTY OF PLACER PROBATION DEPARTMENT

*Norma Suzuki*  
Chief Probation Officer

## PLACER COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY RESPONSE TO 2000/01 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

### Finding 1

The external doors at the Juvenile Detention Center are secured with manual locks and keys which creates the potential for delay in the event of emergency evacuations.

#### Response:

Director of the Juvenile Detention Facility

**I partially agree with the finding. Having exterior doors controlled electronically could save a few seconds in case of emergency. However, it takes only a few seconds to manually unlock a door in a building that is largely fireproof.**

#### Recommendation 1:

#### Response:

Director of the Juvenile Detention Facility

**The recommendation to provide electronically controlled outer doors from a secure location will probably not be implemented for the following reason:**

- **The physical plan was approved by the State of California Board of Corrections without electronically controlled outer doors.**
- **There is currently an ability to electronically release all cell doors to allow the safe, secure exit from the facility through a designed, posted fire evacuation plan approved by County Risk Management.**

### Finding 2

As noted in last year's Grand Jury report, certain aspects of the facility's construction may allow juveniles to harm themselves or others. Stairways have open railings. The handicapped lift has an easily accessed electrical panel.



# COUNTY OF PLACER PROBATION DEPARTMENT

*Norma Suzuki*  
Chief Probation Officer

## Response:

Director of the Juvenile Detention Facility:

**I disagree with the finding regarding the handicap lift. The power supply to the handicap lift is off and padlocked, and access to and operation of the lift controls also requires a separate key.**

**With regard to the stairways, the railings are not open, but are enclosed by a clear Plexiglas covering. Although it is conceivable someone could be pushed over or jump from the railing, to date this has not been an issue. Other institutional facilities that have a similar design have not reported problems with inmates being pushed or jumping from the upper tier to the ground floor.**

## Recommendation 2

### Response:

Director of the Juvenile Detention Facility

**Open railings on staircases are a staff supervision issue. Direct staff supervision of minors within the housing units allows for monitoring and control of most safety concerns near stairways, railings, and the handicapped lift.**

## Finding 3

Juvenile Detention Center management should conduct an immediate analysis of staffing levels and male/female demographics in relation to the physical plant to ensure full-time, part-time and on-call staff are adequate at all times to meet the needs of youth housed in the facility.

### Response:

Director of the Juvenile Detention Facility

**I partially agree with the finding. Recruitment and hiring of qualified staff is an ongoing concern, especially of extra help positions. The facility is currently adequately staffed with full time officers, but there are times when it has been difficult to cover vacation and/or sick time because of vacancies and minimal extra help. The Chief Probation Officer is committed to adequately staffing the Juvenile**



# COUNTY OF PLACER PROBATION DEPARTMENT

*Norma Suzuki*  
Chief Probation Officer

**Detention Facility and has, on several occasions during the past year, temporarily reassigned officers from other positions within the Department to cover openings at the JDF.**

## Recommendation 3

### Response:

Director of the Juvenile Detention Facility

**This recommendation has been implemented. There is currently a “continuous recruitment” for extra help, and potential employees can submit an application at any time. Probation staff have been attending “Job Fairs” in the hope of recruiting new potential employees.**

## Finding 4

The Grand Jury recommends that the draft policy authorizing the use of pepper spray by appropriately trained staff be approved and implemented as soon as possible.

### Response:

Director of the Juvenile Detention Facility

**I agree with the finding.**

## Recommendation 4

### Response:

Director of the Juvenile Detention Facility

**This recommendation is currently being implemented. A policy for use of pepper spray has been written and approved by County Counsel. A training session is scheduled for mid-August, and staff should be issued pepper spray shortly thereafter.**

## Finding 5



# COUNTY OF PLACER PROBATION DEPARTMENT

---

*Norma Suzuki*  
*Chief Probation Officer*

The Grand Jury recommends that the Probation Department contract with appropriate institutions within Placer County to provide family centered services for children and youth under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court who need residential treatment services for mental health problems.

**Response:**

Director of the Juvenile Detention Facility

**I agree with the finding.**

**Recommendation 5**

**Response:**

Director of the Juvenile Detention Facility

**I do not have the authority to implement this recommendation.**